

Special Student Edition

*The summer 2010 edition was written by the students and staff of the
King County YouthSource Summer Environmental Water Resources class.*

Thoughts, Observations and Discoveries

King County YouthSource Summer Environmental Water Resources Class

By Luzviminda Uzuri "Lulu" Carpenter, Program Aide



Instructor Roger Rigor and Larry Jones, King County water quality scientist, orient classmembers.

The 2010 King County YouthSource Summer Environmental Water Resources class was sponsored by the U. S. Department of Labor, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, and the King County Work Training Program. The program was conducted in partnership with King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks, along with the King County Superior Court and the Highline School District.

Water! What a precious resource that is forgotten and taken for granted; this is similar to our young people at times. Through this "Water Quality" course, I learned to appreciate youth more and understand their ability to learn and feed their hunger for knowledge despite circumstances and hardship. Combining youth and water makes natural sense, because both are needed in order to create a sustainable future. As people within King County attempt to create foundations for our environment, we are also creating foundations for youth to flourish by giving them tools to survive within the system and providing sustainable options through learning about work ethic and care for one's environment.

This year's program consisted of 13 students ranging between the ages of 15 and 18. Each student chose to be in this summer class to improve themselves and their education. Students received one full credit for completing the classroom course assignments and work requirements within the curriculum. The class doubled as a job training internship and students were paid by the hour and learned basic job skills. Some main objectives of this year's program were to connect water resources to their lived experience and to make work and class an interactive learning experience (See "Field Study, Lecture and Deadlines" chart for class and work activities).

The classroom activities were designed to provide additional information and enhance their real life experiences (See curriculum on page 4). With curriculum that included multiple readings, research, and lectures. The students learned a lot and had much to discuss and relate to. They also watched films about the Earth, the oceans and the sun, such as "Fresh Water, Deep Ocean, Shallow Seas," and "Ice Worlds" to learn about traditional sciences. These videos were matched with personal stories that told the troubled history of our poisoned waters, harmed farmland and difficulties in the food industry. Those videos included "Erin Brockovich," "Poisoned Waters," "Food, Inc.," "The Story of Stuff," "Trouble the Waters," Jay Z's documentary "Water for Life," and news stories on BP Oil spills and more.

(Continued on next page).



Guest speaker Kristi Brown of That Brown Girl Catering



Removal of invasive plants at Pigeon Point restoration site with the Nature Consortium



Studying insects at Coal Creek

(Continued from front page).

Students were challenged by stories of water – from shortages and lack of water in various countries to hurricanes and natural disasters – that demonstrate who we are as humans, just below the surface. The students had critical questions and deep observations that they brought forth during films discussions and even more so during workshops with speakers.



Removing invasive weeds at Cottage Lake

Speakers included Gary Owens of JustWater, Gabriel Teodros and Katrina Pestano, aka Rogue Pinay (community teaching artists) discussing hip hop, water, artists for change, and globalization, Kristi Brown of That Brown Girl Catering and GO Live!, Michael Woo and Khepra Ptah of Got Green, Christine Guiao talking about water, DNA, and the body, Kiana Davis discussing Jay Z and a collective poem (see Page 5), and Aaron Dixon discussing environmental injustice.

Each speaker spoke with patience and passion about topics ranging from aliens and science fiction to the power of people to change their world beginning with one drop of water and one bite of food. Every lecture, workshop, community speaker, and video connected back to their life and their interconnectedness to water. In the end, our hope is that they see not only water, but also themselves as a valuable resource.

The students were able to see other natural resources outside of class and not just talk about them. Each site visit demonstrated to students the value of water in their lives. The field trips were educational and organized to expose students to various job and career opportunities. Students learned about these opportunities connected to improving their lives and others while having an environmental benefit.

Educationally, each tour, field trip, or physical activity enhanced what was taught in the classroom through lectures, interactive workshops, films, research, and community speakers. Students

learned about invasive plants such as blackberries around the Duwamish and then went to pull these tough plants out with the Nature Consortium. Each trip was work, but they learned at Coal Creek how healthy a stream is from observing bugs, and learned at Shadow Lake Bog how land reforests itself next to a watershed to protect the water source long term. They learned about the source of their drinking water at the Cedar River Watershed and about where water goes after it is flushed at the South Wastewater Treatment Plant in Renton.

Through going to places such as the Seattle Aquarium, University of Washington Botanical Gardens, the Arboretum, Ballard Locks, Queen Anne and Magnolia bluffs, and the Duwamish River, the students were absorbed into the world of land and water. They were also absorbed by people, including those who gave tours, steered boats, drove cars, worked the land, and most importantly, those who shared with the students the passion behind the work they do. From beginning to end, students were engaged in learning about the water that surrounded them and that was in them.

Each article was written by the students and is heartfelt. King County Staff assisted with editing, photos and the newsletter design. However, the articles are the individual student's observations, thoughts and discoveries except as noted.

We hope you can hear the wonder and feel their enlightenment and curiosity about the world.

Luzviminda “Lulu” Carpenter

Lulu graduated from Washington State University with her M.A. in American Studies and her B.A. in English. Her research focused on multiracialism and mixed race identity within the context of American society and culture. She has worked within various community and non-profit organizations around issues of diversity, cultural competency, and inclusion. Her work includes developing and consulting on programs, workshops, trainings, and presentations. Also, she has published writings and is a well known community advocate. Carpenter has worked at Edmonds Community College as an AmeriCorps' Service Learning Coordinator. Currently, she works for the John Stanford Public Service & Political Science Academy of Franklin High School as the Community Projects Manager. Carpenter has shown her commitment for youth and has brought this knowledge and experience to the classroom, field work, and office at YouthSource.



This we know.
All things are connected
Like the blood
Which unites one family....
Whatever befalls the earth,
Befalls the sons and daughters
of the earth.

Man did not weave the web of life;
He is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web,
He does to himself.

– by Ted Perry, inspired by Chief Seattle



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